

Major Synthesizing Works

Charles E. Fritz. 1961. "Disasters." Pp. 651-694 in *Contemporary Social Problems*, edited by Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet. New York: Harcourt. Placing the study of disasters within a social problems framework, this chapter presents a summary of the major findings and conclusions derived from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) field team studies and other assessments made during the 1950s. This work is the first effort to place "disaster" into a social problems context.

Allen H. Barton. 1969. *Communities in Disaster: A Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc. This is a revision and update of a monograph published in the NAS series (*Social Organization Under Stress*) which synthesizes empirical studies from the 1950s and early 1960s. Brilliant theory construction is a unique feature, especially pertaining to the emergency social system and the rise of altruism after disaster.

Russell R. Dynes. 1970. *Organized Behavior in Disaster*. Lexington, Massachusetts: Heath Lexington Books. Drawing upon over 250 research abstracts of empirical disaster field studies, Dynes integrates the major conclusions regarding organizational functioning and community response. Many of the conceptual tools used in this analysis have become standards in the field.

E.L. Quarantelli (ed.). 1978. *Disasters: Theory and Research*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc. Drawing upon work mostly completed by recent DRC graduates (14 of the 17 chapters), this edited collection demonstrates the state of disaster theory and research in the late 1970s. Chapters reflect either theoretical issues, e.g., D.E. Wenger, "Community Response to Disaster: Functional and Structural Alterations" and G.A. Kreps, "The Organization of Disaster Response: Some Fundamental Theoretical Issues" or empirical studies, e.g., G.A. Ross, "Organizational Innovation in Disaster Settings" and J.A. Hannigan and R.M. Kueneman, "Anticipating Flood Emergencies: A Case Study of a Canadian Disaster Subculture."

Thomas E. Drabek. 1986. *Human System Responses to Disaster: An Inventory of Sociological Findings*. New York: Springer-Verlag. The key conclusions are listed from nearly 1,000 published studies. They are integrated into a conceptual framework that reflects the disaster life cycle, i.e., preparedness (planning and warning); responses (evacuation and emergency actions); recovery (restoration and reconstruction; and mitigation (hazard perceptions and attitudes toward the adoption of adjustments). Often referred to as "the disaster encyclopedia", this text summarizes major conclusions on 146 subtopics for which 1,232 empirically supported findings are related.

Russell R. Dynes, Bruna DeMarchi and Carlo Pelanda (eds.). 1987. *Sociology of Disasters: Contribution of Sociology to Disaster Research*. Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli. Charged by the editors to demonstrate the linkages between basic sociological theory and empirical studies of disasters, 17 researchers prepared the 15 chapters that comprise this edited collection. The topics range from basics like communication (J.M. Nigg, "Communication and Behavior: Organizational and Individual Response to Warnings") and collective behavior (D.E. Wenger, "Collective Behavior and Disaster Research") to newer issues like critical theory (W. Dombrowsky, "Critical Theory in Sociological Disaster Research"), and the dissensus regarding the conceptualization of disaster (N.R. Britton, "Toward a Reconceptualization of Disaster for the Enhancement of Social Preparation").

Thomas E. Drabek and Gerard J. Hoetmer (eds.). 1991. *Emergency Management: Principles and Practice for Local Government*. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association. This is the first text book on emergency management. Published in the distinguished "Greenbook Series" sponsored by the International City Management Association (ICMA), this edited collection integrates theoretical summaries written by academics (e.g., G.A. Kreps, "Organizing for Emergency Management" and T.J. Scanlon, "Reaching Out: Getting the Community Involved in Preparedness") and the lessons learned by emergency managers (e.g., T. Durham and L.E. Suiter, "Perspectives and Roles of the State and Federal Governments" and G.E. Daines, "Planning, Training, and Exercising").

E.L. Quarantelli (ed.). 1998. *What Is a Disaster? Perspectives on the Question*. London: Routledge. Through this collection of 21 chapters and his own "epilogue," E.L. Quarantelli pushed numerous scholars to rethink the assumptions implied in their conceptualization of "disaster". Four (Claude Gilbert, Wolf R. Dombrowsky, Gary A. Kreps and Boris N. Porfiriev) set the stage by articulating their definition of disaster and their approach to its study. Challenges to their perspectives were offered by Kenneth Hewitt. Reactions and rebuttals by each of the four authors comprise the next four chapters. "Future conceptions of Disaster" are then offered in the next five chapters written by another batch of seasoned disaster researchers. These are followed by a reaction paper written by Ronald W. Perry. The author's of the five chapters then respond to Perry's reaction paper. Finally, in his "Epilogue," Quarantelli proposes his thoughts on the matter which reflect his symbolic interactionist perspective, i.e., physical and agent features of disasters will be less helpful in knowledge accumulation than social definitions and attributes.